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EXAMINER	
STERRETT, JONATHAN G	
ART UNIT	**PAPER NUMBER**
3623	

DATE MAILED: 12/21/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/970,455	BENJAMIN ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Jonathan G. Sterrett	3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *03 October 2001*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-18* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-18* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *1-17-2002*.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Summary

1. **Claims 1-18** are pending in the application.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The listing of references in the specification is not a proper information disclosure statement. 37 CFR 1.98(b) requires a list of all patents, publications, or other information submitted for consideration by the Office, and MPEP § 609.04(a) states, "the list may not be incorporated into the specification but must be submitted in a separate paper." Therefore, unless the references have been cited by the examiner on form PTO-892, they have not been considered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. **Claim 11** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential structural cooperative relationships of elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the necessary structural connections. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted structural cooperative relationships are: **Claim 11** recites a system with software modules without the elements necessary for a system including: a processor and a program stored in a computer readable medium.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

5. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

> Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

6. **Claims 1, 11 and 15** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. In order to be statutory, the claimed invention must produce a useful, concrete, and tangible real-world result. An invention that fails to produce a tangible result is one that involves no more than the manipulation of an abstract idea. In order to be concrete, the result must be substantially repeatable or re-produce the same result. The result is useful when there is a real-world practical application.

Claim 1 recites a series of steps that are adapted to define a job attribute vector, define a plurality of performance metrics and performance vector, define initial values and generate a supplier rating matrix by combining the job attribute and performance vectors. These limitations fail on all the requirements under 35 USC 101. First, since the steps are not tangibly embodied, they are considered to be an abstract idea. The steps are adapted to perform various functions that appear to be subjective, and thus fail the concrete test as the steps would not produce a result that is repeatable. Finally, there is no real-world practical application recited and the steps are considered to fail the useful test.

Claim 11 recites two software modules that are adapted to define a job attribute vector, define a plurality of performance metrics and performance

vector, define initial values and generate a supplier rating matrix by combining the job attribute and performance vectors. These limitations fail on all the requirements under 35 USC 101. First, since the software modules are not tangibly embodied, they are considered to be an abstract idea. The software modules are adapted to perform various functions that appear to be subjective, and thus fail the concrete test as the steps would not produce a result that is repeatable. Finally, there is no real-world practical application recited and the software modules are considered to fail the useful test.

Claim 15 recites computer readable program means that are adapted to define a job attribute vector, define a plurality of performance metrics and performance vector, define initial values and generate a supplier rating matrix by combining the job attribute and performance vectors. These limitations fail on the requirements under 35 USC 101. The examiner interprets the claims to be invoking 112 USC 6th. The software modules are tangibly embodied, and thus are not considered to be an abstract idea. However, the computer readable program means are adapted to perform various functions that appear to be subjective, and thus fail the concrete test as the steps would not produce a result that is repeatable. Finally, there is no real-world practical application recited and the computer readable program means are considered to fail the useful test.

Therefore **Claims 1, 11 and 15** are directed towards a non-statutory subject matter.

Claim 11 cites data structures (i.e. software modules) without claiming that the data structures as being embodied in computer-readable media. Data structures not claimed as embodied in computer-readable media are descriptive material per se and are not statutory because they are not capable of causing functional change in the computer. See, e.g., Warmerdam, 33 F.3d at 1361, 31 USPQ2 at 1760.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. **Claims 1, 4-11, 13-15, 17 and 18** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Prasad**.

Prasad, Biren; "JIT Quality Matrices for strategic planning and implementation", 1995, International Journal of Operations & Production Management, v15n9, pp.116-142.

Regarding **Claim 1** Prasad teaches:

defining a plurality of performance metrics;

Page 3 paragraph 7, JIT performance improvement objectives (i.e. metrics) are defined using the JIT matrices taught by Prasad – see also page 4

paragraph 1, Prasad references Ohno's pioneering work in the Toyota Production System in identifying objectives (i.e. metrics) that measure performance in eliminating waste.

defining a performance vector, the performance vector including a plurality of dimensions each corresponding to a performance metric;

page 6 paragraph 1 line 7-9, the JIT matrix defines various vectors, each vector including a plurality of metrics that define performance according to a plurality of dimensions. In paragraph 2 of page 6, machine/job quick set up is delineated as one of the dimensions of the JIT performance vector.

Prasad further teaches in page 3 paragraph 5, that using a JIT matrix (and associated vectors) can be used to evaluate specific requirements for evaluating operational performance (page 1 paragraph 2) and that using vectors (as part of the structured methodology to provide JIT performance evaluation (see page 3 paragraph 5).

Prasad's teaching above regarding using a structured approach to evaluating and processing JIT requirements to identify and improve specific performance items also includes:

defining a first initial value for the job attribute vector;

defining a second initial value for the performance vector; and

Page 1 paragraph 1a, the matrix based approach (including the use of vectors –see page 6 paragraph 1 for a discussion of how vectors (i.e. performance and job attribute) are incorporated into the JIT matrices) is used to evaluate a JIT implementation at various stages, i.e. including for a first initial value for a job attribute vector and a second initial value for the performance vector.

defining a plurality of job attributes each including a plurality of sub-attributes, each sub-attribute representing a range of job attribute values;

Page 4 paragraph 5, job attribute of 'performance improvement objectives' includes the sub attributes of 7 types of waste to be eliminated.

defining a job attribute vector, the job attribute vector including a plurality of dimensions each corresponding to a sub-attribute;

Page 4 paragraph 5, job attribute of 'performance improvement objectives' includes the sub attributes of 7 types of waste to be eliminated.

Prasad does not teach:

generating a supplier-rating matrix for the supplier by mathematically combining the job attribute vector and the performance vector.

Although Prasad does not teach defining a first initial value for the job attribute vector and generating a supplier-rating matrix for the supplier by mathematically combining the job attribute vector and the performance vector,

Prasad does teach selecting which sub attributes are being selected for evaluation and also the use of vectors and matrices to represent evaluation criteria.

Official Notice is taken that it is old and well known in the art of vector mathematics to use a dummy variable (i.e. a "1") as a selection mechanism for use in vector operations. This provides an easy to use way to incorporate setting a vector to an initial value (i.e. a "1") to select a corresponding element in another vector.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings of Prasad, regarding using matrices and vectors in operational evaluation, to include the step of defining a first initial value for a job attribute vector and using that value to mathematically generate a supplier rating matrix by combining the job attribute vector with the performance vector, because it would make it easy to generate a supplier-rating matrix through the use of a vector operation.

Regarding **Claim 4**, Prasad teaches all of the limitations above except for using the matrix-vector technique to provide for the evaluation of a second supplier and using the first and second supplier evaluation as the basis for performing a supplier selection.

Prasad teaches that his technique of using matrices and vectors can be used to provide for evaluation of a supplier, as discussed above, and teaches using the evaluations as a basis for selecting a supplier based on the rating the supplier receives from the evaluation Prasad teaches using his techniques for supplier development and rationalization, see page 7 paragraphs 2 and 5. Rationalization in this context is understood by the examiner to mean the selection of a supplier for a particular job. Rationalization in JIT as a production methodology is necessary because of the close customer-supplier link inherently required by the concept of 'just-in-time'.

Regarding **Claim 5**, Prasad teaches the first job attribute vector and first performance vector as discussed above and in using his technique as a way to evaluate and select suppliers (see page 7 paragraphs 2 and 5). Prasad does not teach where this evaluative method is used for a proposed job.

However, the concept of receiving data to evaluate a supplier for a proposed job is old and well known in the art of supply-chain management. RFP's and RFQ's are standard, efficient ways to receive data from suppliers to provide for comparative evaluation of those suppliers to ensure a supplier is evaluated so that the best supplier for a proposed job is selected.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Prasad regarding using matrices and

vectors for use in evaluating suppliers, to include the step of using the matrices and vectors to evaluate a supplier for a proposed job, because it would ensure the best supplier for a proposed job is selected.

Regarding **Claim 6**, Prasad teaches:

defining the attributes and the plurality of sub attributes using a technical requirements specification of a customer of a supplier.

Page 7 paragraph 1, machine capabilities to maximize resource allocation in a manufacturing environment would require knowing the capabilities of the equipment versus the specification of a customer, to ensure that quality standards were met. Also see page 7 paragraph 10, the corrective action in the context of SPC here requires knowing if parts exceed customer specifications.

Regarding **Claim 7**, Prasad teaches:

the plurality of job attributes to include dimensional tolerance, turnaround time and quantity.

The use of control charts as discussed above, include dimensional tolerance and variability.

Page 8 paragraph 4, delivery time, responsiveness and fast to market (i.e. turnaround time).

Page 7 paragraph 7, batch size is quantity of pieces.

Regarding **Claim 8**, Prasad teaches:

defining the plurality of sub-attributes corresponding to the dimensional tolerance attribute to include a plurality of ranges of tolerance values;

Page 7 paragraph 1 and 10, the use of control charts in the matrix includes a plurality of ranges of tolerance values, depending on the precision of the machine whose SPC figures are being tracked.

defining the plurality of sub-attributes corresponding to the quantity attribute to include a plurality of ranges of quantity values; and

Page 7 paragraph 7, batch sizes related to transportation would include a plurality of ranges of quantity values.

defining the plurality of sub-attributes corresponding to the turnaround time attribute to include a plurality of ranges of times.

Page 7 paragraph 9, lead time reductions would include a plurality of ranges of times.

Regarding **Claim 9**, Prasad teaches:

defining the plurality of performance metrics to include speed, quality, cost and service.

Page 7 paragraph 9, lead time reductions would include a plurality of ranges of times and would include the speed of the lead time.

Page 7 paragraph 1 and 10, the use of control charts in the matrix includes quality. The performance metrics also include multi-machine/multi-

process handling (i.e. service). Also, the implementation of JIT as a system implies a high level of service since output and delivery is "just in time".

Page 1 paragraph 2, requirements associated with manufacturing system design include cost and quality.

Regarding **Claim 10**, Prasad teaches:

the supplier rating matrix includes a number of columns and a number of rows wherein the step of generating further comprises multiplying the job attribute vector by the performance vector, resulting in the supplier rating matrix including the number of columns corresponding to the number of dimensions of the job attribute vector and the number of rows corresponding to the number of dimensions of the performance vector.

As discussed above, Prasad teaches using matrices and vectors in supplier evaluation. In Figure 5, a supplier rating matrix includes a number of columns and a number of rows. The multiplication of the two matrices results in a supplier performance vector that is scored between sub attributes of waste and the supplier attribute vector of quick-setup. The number of column corresponds to the number of dimensions of the job attribute vector (i.e. identification and elimination of waste) and the performance vector (i.e. quick setup).

Claims 11, 13-15, 17 and 18 recite limitations similar to those addressed in the rejection of **Claims 1 and 4-10** above, and are therefore rejected under the same rationale.

9. **Claims 2, 3, 12 and 16** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Prasad** in view of **Guttman**.

Guttman, Robert H., "Merchant Differentiation through Integrative Negotiation in Agent-minded Electronic Commerce", MS Thesis, MIT Department of Media Arts and Sciences, May 7, 1999, pp.1-153.

Regarding **Claim 2** Prasad teaches:

wherein the job attribute vector is a first job attribute vector, the performance vector is a first performance vector and the supplier rating matrix is a first supplier rating matrix further comprising;

Page 1 paragraph 1A, Prasad teaches the job attribute vector, performance vector and supplier rating as discussed above, and the use of a matrix-based procedure to quantify and rank a set of tactics during JIT implementation (i.e. including a first through the number of times the matrix is used).

receiving data associated with a specific service supplied to a customer of the supplier; generating a second performance vector in response to the received data;

Page 4 paragraph 3, JQM consists of eight matrices – the "what's" matrix receives data associated with a specific service supplied to a customer of the supplier. Since the JIT ("Just in Time") philosophy encompasses receiving material from a supplier to support a just-in-time methodology on a production floor, the measurement associated with the set of objectives described by Prasad includes receiving data associated with a specific service supplied to a customer of the supplier.

defining a weighting factor; and

Prasad teaches using weighting factors to assign importance to various factors (page 8 paragraph 4).

Prasad does not teach:

generating a second job attribute vector in response to the specific service, the second job attribute vector indicating which range of job attribute values are associated with the specific service;

As noted above in Claim 1, Official Notice is taken that the use of a job attribute vector to function as a selection mechanism, including for a first and second job attribute vectors, is old and well known in the art (i.e. a dummy variable).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings of Prasad, regarding using matrices and vectors in operational evaluation, to include the step of defining a second value for a job attribute vector

and using that value to mathematically generate a supplier rating matrix by combining the job attribute vector with the performance vector, because it make it easy to generate a supplier-rating matrix through the use of a vector operation.

Prasad does not teach:

generating a second supplier-rating matrix for the supplier by mathematically combining the first supplier rating matrix, the weighting factor, and the second performance vector.

Guttman teaches:

generating a second supplier-rating matrix for the supplier by mathematically combining the first supplier rating matrix, the weighting factor, and the second performance vector.

Page 105 paragraph 1 & Equation 4, Guttman teaches evaluating a counter proposal (i.e. generating a second supplier rating matrix) by mathematically combining the first supplier rating matrix ("V"), the weighting factor (page 105 line 1 "weighted utilities), the second performance vector ("fi(xi) – fi(xprime i).

Guttman teaches that his method of updating the second supplier rating matrix is an advantage over the previous method since it maintains the partial results of the previous assessment (page 104 paragraph 3).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the teachings of Prasad, regarding using matrices and vectors in supplier evaluation, to include the step of using a second performance input and weighting factor, as taught by Guttman, because it would provide improved evaluation of a supplier by taking into account their previous performance.

Regarding **Claim 3,** Prasad teaches using matrices and vectors as discussed above, and applying weights to individual performance measures, as discussed above but does not teach:

multiplying the second job attribute vector by the second performance vector, thereby generating a third supplier rating matrix;

multiplying the first supplier-rating matrix by the weighting factor, thereby generating a fourth supplier rating matrix;

multiplying the third supplier rating matrix by the difference of one minus the weighting factor, thereby generating a fifth supplier rating matrix; and

adding the fourth supplier-rating matrix to the fifth supplier-rating matrix, thereby generating the second supplier-rating matrix.

Guttman teaches these limitations in the calculation of a new product offering in Equation 4 on page 105. Each new performance matrix is expressed as a function of the old matrix minus a weighting factor applied to a change in the utilities (i.e. f sub i(x sub i)). Factoring out the "V" out of this equation provides

for mathematically the same result as the claimed "the difference of one minus the weighting factor" that is applied to the first supplier rating matrix. What is being claimed is the equation and technique of Guttman, which is to use a weighted average approach to combining a series of evaluations so that the final evaluation is a weighted average sum of the previous evaluations. In Guttman, the equation element w sub j, provides for the weighted average combination of a current evaluation matrix using the new matrix times 1 minus the weighting factor plus the old matrix times the weighting factor to provide a weighted average sum of both performance matrices.

Guttman teaches that his method of updating the second supplier rating matrix is an advantage over the previous method since it maintains the partial results of the previous assessment (page 104 paragraph 3).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings of Prasad, regarding using matrices and vectors in supplier evaluation, to include the step of using a second performance input and weighting factor, as taught by Guttman, because it would provide improved evaluation of a supplier by taking into account their previous performance using a weighted average.

Claims 12 and 16 recite limitations similar to those addressed in the rejection of **Claim 2 and 3** above, and are therefore rejected under the same rationale.

Conclusion

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Mohanty, R P; Deshmukh, S G; "Use of analytic hierarchic process for evaluating sources of supply", 1993, International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, v23n3, pp.22-28, Dialog 00771452 94-20844

Youssef, Mohamed A; Mohammed Zairi; Bidhu, Mohanty; "Supplier selection in an advanced manufacturing technology environment: an optimization model", 1996, Benchmarking for Quality Management & Technology, v3n4, pp.60, Dialog 02243566 84986974.

Ncube, Matotent M; "A Comparison of Cusum-Cuscore and Ewma-Cuscore Quality Control Procedures", 1992, International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, v9n5, pp.42-50, Dialog 00658134 93-07355.

Teresko, John, "E-collaboration", June 12, 2000, IndustryWeek, Cleveland, Vol. 249, Iss. 11, p.31(4), ProQuest ID 55349171.

Sheridan, John M; "Bridging the Enterprise Gap", Apr 1999, IndustryWeek, Vol. 248, Iss. 7, p.17, ABI/INFORM Global.

Edwards, Jeffrey R, "Problems with the use of profile similarity indices in the study of congruence in organizational research", Autumn 1993, Personnel Psychology, v46n3, pp.641-665, Dialog 00769050 94-18442.

Parasuraman, A; Zeithaml, Valarie A; Berry, Leonard L; "Reassessment of expectations as a comparison standard in measuring service quality:

Implications for further research", Jan 1994, Journal of Marketing, n58n1, pp.111-124, Dialog 00807261 94-56653.

Plummer, John, "Tighter process control with neural networks", Oct 1993, AI Expert, v8, n10, p.49(7), Dialog 01619799 14366710.

Teas, R Kenneth; "Expectations, performance evaluation, and consumer's perceptions of quality", Oct 1993, Journal of Marketing, v57n4, pp, 18-34, Dialog 00774399 94-23791.

Partovi, Fariborz Y; Hopton, Walter E; "The analytic hierarchy process as applied to two types of inventory problems", First Quarter 1993, Production & Inventory Management Journal, v35n1, pp.13-19, Dialog 00857081 95-06473.

Davis, Lesley; Williams, Glyn; "Evaluating and Selecting simulation software using the analytic hierarchy process", 1994, Integrated Manufacturing Systems, v5n1, pp.23-32, Dialog 00861502 95-10894.

Belardo, Salvatore; Duchessi, Peter; Coleman, John R; "A strategic decision support system at Orell Fussli", Spring 1994, Journal of Management Information Systems: JMIS, v10n4, pp.135-157, Dialog 00904600 95-53992.

Ahire, Sanja L; Rana, Dharam S; "Selection of TQM pilot projects using an MCDM approach", 1995, International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, v12n1, pp.61-81, Dialog 00997229 96-46622.

Prasad, Biren; "Synthesis of market research data through a combined effort of QFD, value engineering and value graph techniques", 1998, Qualitative Market Research, v1n3, pp.156-172, Dialog 02329178 86924658.

Hauser, John R; Clausing, Don; "The House of Quality", May-June 1988, Harvard Business Review, Reprint 88307, pp.1-13.

PR Newswire, "Agile Software Launches Agile Anywhere™ B2B E-commerce Applications for the Integrated Supply Chain", June 15, 1999, New York, p.1, ProQuest ID 42399679.

PR Newswire, "Agile, Si2, Demonstrate Internet-Based Information Standard for Electronic Components", June 22, 1999, New York, p.1, ProQuest ID 42583206.

US 5369570 by Parad discloses a method for resource management.

US 5550746 by Jacobs discloses a method to correlate customer selection criteria with product data.

US 5819232 by Shipman discloses a method for inventory control of a manufacturing process.

US 6249785 by Paepke discloses a method for predicting ratings.

US 6308161 by Boden discloses a method for business process definition.

US 6393406 by Eder discloses a method for valuing elements of a business enterprise.

US 6487541 by Aggarwal discloses a method for collaborative filtering with applications to e-commerce.

US 6631305 by Newmark discloses a capability analysis of assembly line production.

US 6631365 by Neal discloses a method for analyzing the content of a database.

US 6708155 by Honarvar discloses a decision management system with automated strategy optimization.

US 6895385 by Zacharia discloses a method for ascribing a reputation to an entity as a rater of other entities.

Conclusion

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jonathan G. Sterrett whose telephone number is 571-272-6881. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-6.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on 571-272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JGS 12-2-2005

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